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## Effect of the Practice of Assessment in Augmenting Creativity: Perspective of the TESL, Educational Management and Leadership, and Visual Art Learners

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### ABSTRACT

*The emphasis on developing creativity in Malaysian institutions of higher education has brought significant changes to assessment practices in higher education today. A study was conducted to explore postgraduate students' perceptions of assessment and the influence of classroom assessment practices on students' creativity. A conceptual framework was built, based on the integration of convergent and divergent thinking coined by Guilford (1950) as well as Bloom's taxonomy (1956) which underpins the assessment approaches. The study employed a mixed method research design and involved a group of final year full-time postgraduate students ( $n=40$ ) from three different programmes in the Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam. Findings revealed that students had a positive attitude to assessment as an integral aspect in the classroom, particularly in relation to the transparency of assessment ( $M = 4.114$ ,  $SD = 0.648$ ). Interestingly, oral presentation was perceived to be one of the best assessment methods as it could develop creative ability, suggesting that presentations could be conducted creatively. The findings have implications for curriculum development across different programmes in order to develop creativity in higher education.*

**Keywords:** Assessment practices; creativity; postgraduate; higher education

### INTRODUCTION

In every academic setting, assessment has its role as being part of an important aspect of pedagogy. Many researchers assert that assessment does not only encompass the distribution of monthly tests or standardized public examination among students (Chan & Sidhu, 2009; Wynder, 2008;). Rather, assessment is seen as an integral part of teaching and learning that is utilized to enhance students' academic performance (Cheah, 2010). In doing so, emphasis on assessment methods which are authentic, flexible and process oriented are required to evaluate students'

strengths and weaknesses. This is imperative to ensure a more meaningful and effective learning to take place within the instructional setting.

At present, many types of assessment are being practised in higher learning institutions. This enables learners to reflect on their academic development based on the evaluation made on their progress in learning (Kavaliauskiene, Kaminskiene & Anusiene, 2007). Various assessments do not only influence instruction, but also affect how students approach learning. Furthermore, students of higher learning institutions are exposed to a more challenging learning environment as they progress in their field of studies (Lee King Siong, Hazita Azman & Koo Yew Lie, 2010). This is particularly true as they advance further in their academic excellence. Students are expected to engage in active participation and present ideas effectively in both assignments as well as classroom discussion. Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MOE) also highlighted 10 significant leaps in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2015-2025, that assist in the ongoing excellence of student aspiration in higher education. One of the stated leaps emphasized on the importance for graduates to be equipped with relevant generic skills to respond to future challenges in the current competitive market (Ministry of Education, 2015). For this reason, various forms of measureable assessments are essential to gauge students' performance in different areas. This includes several criteria including assessment policy, fairness in awarding marks and clear details of assessment which are vital aspects for both students and educators to understand (Rust, 2002).

Interestingly, the dimension of creativity is still seeking its position as a significant element within the education system. According to Zhou, Chen and Luo (2014), the relationship between learning and creativity has long been developed. Increased interest associated with creativity is seen in fields such as cultural psychology (Glaveanu, 2010), philosophy (Singer, 2011) and even economics and management (Fischer, Oget & Cavallucci, 2016). Past literatures have also looked into the need for creativity in relation to several aspects of learning including personality, education beliefs, motivation and demographic background (Sternberg et. al., 2005; Horng et al., 2005). Nonetheless, the National Education Action Plan (NEAC) report (2010) pronounced that Malaysians are still struggling to reach the desired level in creativity and innovation in learning (Faizah Abd Majid, 2010). Previous studies have also revealed that the teaching and learning environment in many universities were found to be discouraging especially for students to exhibit their creativity in learning (Beghetto, 2005; Elton, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Walker & Gleaves, 2008). As a result, the current teaching and learning practices can no longer support the need for a more creative and innovative learning environment. This appears to be rather upsetting since the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 has significantly emphasized the need for individuals to develop innovative and creative thinking skills in its National Education Philosophy (Ministry of Education, 2015).

In the case of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam, the assessment practices particularly at the postgraduate level still require much attention in terms of its effectiveness. According to Chan and Sidhu (2009), many universities are still practising traditional assessment method as opposed to other alternative assessments. The current method of assessment seems to base largely on assessing students' ability to memorize facts and then, to regurgitate answers during exams. Moreover, past researchers found that students still do not produce quality work

despite having an explicit set of criteria being clearly explained to them (Zhou, Chen & Luo, 2014). Although this may not be surprising, it is disconcerting to witness that this situation seem to recur within the education system.

A local study which investigated 44 postgraduate students' perception of creativity and innovation in research also revealed problems with regards to the need for a more effective assessment to be employed. According to Faizah Abd Majid (2010), postgraduate students of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) who were respondents to the Creative and Innovative Researcher Survey reported that the existing curriculum lacks the global exposure needed by master's students to expand their current knowledge perspective as a creative and innovative researcher. Consequently, one of the suggestions provided by the respondents was the need to revise the assessment procedure alongside student assignments and curriculum structure (Faizah Abd Majid, 2010). The result implies that immense effort is still required in improving assessment procedure to nurture creativity and innovation among adult learners.

Hence, to encourage a thinking society, the learning environment plays important role in stimulating creativity. Universities are often seen as an avenue for students to display and polish their creative thinking ability. To ensure this, students need to shift from the act of memorizing to the art of understanding. One way this can be achieved is by changing the way they are assessed. With this in mind, the study aims to examine students' perception of classroom assessment and to explore the influence of classroom assessment on students' creativity particularly in postgraduate education through the following research objectives:

1. To investigate students' perceptions of classroom assessment in postgraduate education;
2. To identify the types of classroom assessment that augments creativity among students;
3. To explore how classroom assessment influences creativity among students.

### **The Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of the present study takes into consideration the aspects of divergent and convergent thinking as well as stages involved in the Bloom's taxonomy which were materialized in this study. In order to display creativity, divergent and convergent thinking are put into use to further develop creative ability. According to Guilford (1950), convergent thinking requires the ability to synthesize or evaluate information whilst divergent thinking is needed to explore other possible responses that appear relevant. The integration of both convergent and divergent thinking leads to the expression of creativity (Treffinger, 2003). Additionally, the Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) consists of six crucial stages of the cognitive domain which comprised of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation being the most complex level. In the current practice in UiTM, the Bloom's Taxonomy is used to develop an assessment based on the six stages mentioned. With each underlying criteria tested in every assessment, the current study aims to look into students' ability to apply divergent and convergent thinking concurrently to finally display creativity in the

tasks they embark on.

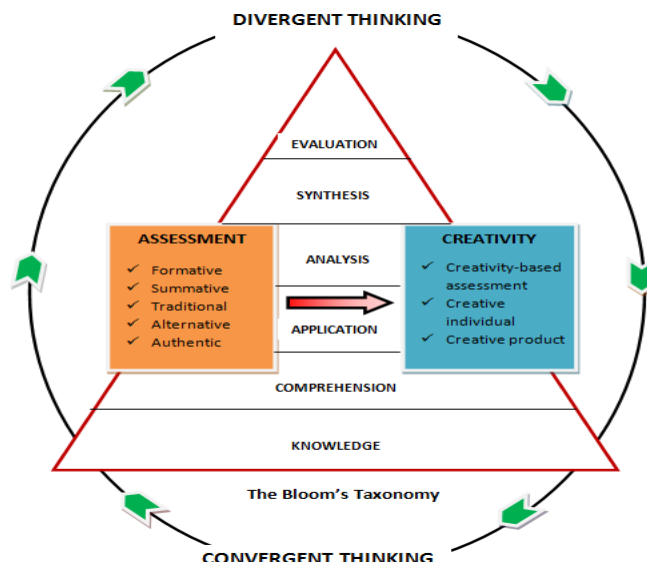


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### The Research Design

The research employed a mixed-method design throughout the course of the study. According to Cresswell (2008), the primary purpose of employing mixed-method research design is to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings. A survey was conducted to answer the first research question that is to explore students' perception on classroom assessment. Additionally, interviews were conducted to obtain information from respondents to answer the second and third research objectives. The interview carried out in the current study aimed to find out students' preferred creative assessment as well as to look into how assessment can nurture creativity among learners.

### Population and Sampling

This study employed cluster sampling in order to obtain the perceptions from the target sample. Three postgraduate programmes were identified for the purpose of this study namely ED720: Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), ED725: Educational Management and Leadership and ED 722: Visual Art. These programmes are carried out in the Faculty of Education at the time this study was conducted. The overall sample for this survey was 40 respondents which involved all final year full-time students from the three aforementioned programmes. For the interviews, five respondents were identified randomly to represent each of the programmes they were taking.

### The Questionnaire

The instrument used in the study is known as the Student Perceptions of Assessment

Questionnaire (SPAQ) developed by Fisher, Waldrup and Dorman (2005), which consists of 24 items. It was adapted and used in this study to inquire students' perceptions of assessment based on five different dimensions (scales): (a) congruence with planned learning; (b) authenticity of assessment; (c) students' consultation about assessment; (d) transparency of assessment; and (d) students' capabilities. Each of the construct consists of several items that are important to answer the research questions. The choices of answers for every item were arranged in a 5-point Likert Scale. Table 1 illustrates the constructs outlined in SPAQ and the number of items for each construct.

Table 1  
Composition of questionnaire items

Construct	No. of items	Sample items
Congruence with planned learning	5	The assessment in this programme tests what I memorize The assessment in this programme tests what I understand
Authenticity	6	I am asked to apply my learning to real life situations The assessment tasks are useful for everyday life
Student Consultation	4	In this programme, I am clear about the types of assessment being used I am aware how my assessment will be marked
Transparency	5	I understand what is needed in all assessment tasks in this programme I am told in advance when I am being assessed
Students Capabilities	4	I can complete the assessment tasks by the given time I am given a choice of assessment tasks
Total:	24	

### The Data Collection

The data collection processes involved in this study was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher obtained a list of names from the respective administrator who is responsible for postgraduate studies at the Education Faculty's main office. Then, the set of instruments were distributed to the target sample. Duration of 30 minutes was given to the respondents to answer the questionnaire during a selected session agreed by all respondents. All instruments were then collected upon completion. The semi-structured interview was carried out in a different session where respondents were interviewed in a group. A set of questions were asked and each individual responded accordingly. The session was recorded and lasted for 45 minutes.

### The Data Analysis

During the data analysis process, the data collected was examined accordingly based on every section. For the quantitative section, the data obtained from the items in SPAQ was analysed and tabulated using the SPSS program 2010 Version 17.0. For the qualitative section, the gathered

data was analysed using the data reduction and data display method as presented by Miles and Huberman (1994). Through this method of analysis, the data collected was then reduced to important and relevant findings. Then, the data was coded and also grouped according to categories. A diagram was then generated based on the categories identified. It is from the diagrams that the conclusion and implications were made.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Students' perceptions of classroom assessment in postgraduate education

The analysis showed that the female respondents represented 82.1% of the overall sample while only 17.9% were male respondents. The distribution of respondents based on programmes revealed that a large number of respondents came from the Educational Management and Leadership Programme with 51.3%. This is followed by the TESL programme with 28.2% and Visual Art programme being the minority with a total of 20.5%. This is not reflective of the actual population based on programmes in the faculty, as the Educational Management and Leadership Programme is fairly new in the faculty as compared to the TESL programme which appears to be the biggest and oldest programme. Nonetheless, the Educational Management and Leadership Programme has gained much popularity over the years with increasing number of students enroll in the programme each year. Following that, an analysis of the respondents CGPA scores revealed that a majority of the scores are between the ranges of 3.50 to 3.74 with a total of 48.6%. This implies that most of the students are consistent in their performance.

Table 2

Overall mean and standard deviation scores of students' responses on five scales assessment questionnaire

Construct	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Congruence with planned learning	3.80	0.560
Assessment authenticity	3.90	0.571
Students' consultation and assessment	3.89	0.628
Transparency of assessment	4.11	0.648
Students' capabilities	3.54	0.802

*Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree    2=Disagree    3=Neutral    4= Agree    5 = Strongly Agree*

The analysis based on Table 2 reveals that students perceived the transparency of assessment to be higher (M = 4.11, SD = 0.648) than the remaining four constructs. Based on the items, this implies that students were aware of the 'what' and 'how' of assessment. Also, it served as an indicator that students understand what their assessment was based on and how their works were assessed. Students possessed a clear understanding of the requirements of a particular assessment as well as how it functions. At the implementation level, it can also be implied that the faculty has ensured the clarity of what is constituted in the assessment at the postgraduate level to the students. Similarly, lecturers had also carried out the necessary responsibility to make the required assessment transparent to the students.

In contrast, the analysis drawn from Table 2 shows that students' capabilities is marked as the lowest ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.802$ ) among the five constructs. This indicates that students negatively perceived their capabilities to perform effectively in an assessment task. Based on the items under this construct, it can be implied that students had limited options in terms of choosing their individual preference to perform a particular task. Also, students did not have the flexibility to respond to a question when faced with confusion.

In sum, the five dimensions of assessment in the questionnaire clearly indicated significant findings in relation to students' perception of assessment in general. The high mean value for the transparency of assessment suggests that students generally understood what the assessment at the postgraduate level is composed of. On the other hand, the lowest mean value for students' capabilities denoted that students did not really gain an opportunity to voice out about the assessment tasks given to them.

Table 3  
Transparency of assessment

Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
I understand what is needed in all assessment tasks in this programme	4.10	0.680
I am told in advance when I am being assessed	4.15	0.745
I am told in advance on what I am being assessed	4.21	0.704
I am clear about what my instructor wants in my assessment tasks	4.05	0.837
I know how a particular assessment task will be marked	3.95	0.759

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree    2=Disagree    3=Neutral    4= Agree    5 = Strongly Agree

Table 3 illustrates the students' perceptions towards transparency of assessment practised in postgraduate education. From the table, a majority of students agreed that they were being informed much earlier on what was to be assessed prior to any assessment ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.704$ ). The findings also revealed that students were aware of when they were being assessed. This statement indicates the second highest mean score after the first statement ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.745$ ). It can therefore be implied that students do not face much problems in obtaining the details of certain assessment before they were being assessed. Furthermore, students' positive attitude towards the transparency of assessment indicated that they have also received adequate consultation from their instructors. This shows that instructors carried out their responsibilities in explaining the details to the students which contributed to their understanding. However, Table 3 also reveals contrasting result which indicates the idea that students were not certain on how the assessment task was marked with the mean score of 3.95. This item was marked as the lowest score among all items. This finding suggests that students were not well-informed about the breakdown of their assessment. Consequently, they were not aware of what the assessment of their work was based on especially concerning the use of assessment rubrics.

Table 4

### Students' capabilities

Construct	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
I can complete the assessment tasks by the given time	3.95	0.887
I am given a choice of assessment tasks	3.29	1.011
I am given assessment tasks that suit my ability	3.64	0.873
When I am confused about an assessment task, I am given another way to answer it	3.28	1.146

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree    2=Disagree    3=Neutral    4= Agree    5 = Strongly Agree

Table 4 presents the findings on students' capabilities with regards to their assessment tasks. Based on the findings, a majority of students claimed that they can complete their assessment tasks within the stipulated time ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.887$ ). This indirectly implies that students did not face much difficulty to meet the deadline of their assignment. However, Table 4 also reveals a low level of agreement ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 1.146$ ) in terms of students choice to approach assessment tasks when confused. The obvious difference suggests that students were not given the flexibility to go about the assessment tasks according to their individual capabilities. In other words, students were expected to complete the tasks based on a rigid sets of guideline. As a result, students' intention to display creativity in the classroom was also limited since the ability to display creativity stems from the amount of flexibility given.

### Types of classroom assessment that encourage creativity among students

Based on the findings, students generally agreed that there were a number of classroom assessments that enhanced creativity in the current practice in postgraduate studies. The interview sessions conducted by the researcher also revealed that some assessments currently practised in the postgraduate level, allow room for creative thinking to be nurtured. According to the responses given, assessment such as article review, presentation, reflective journal and folio are among those that augment creativity among students. From the three, the two assessment types that were most frequently mentioned were presentation followed by article review. One of the reasons stated was described as follows:

*"My favourite type of assessment is when lecturers actually acknowledge our critical thoughts and ideas... Other types of assessment that we've gone through and that I like are reflective journals and **presentations**."*

(Respondent 2)

*"I think all assignments allow me to employ creativity but I think that the assignment that requires the most creativity would be **presentation**... You can do whatever you want to do because you are the presenter, you own the floor. So I think it reveals most of your creativity."*

(Respondent 3)



Based on the responses given, Respondent 2 and 3 indicated that presentation was believed to be one of the significant forms of assessment in developing creativity. This was mainly due to the flexibility presentation offered to them enabling them to go about doing the presentation according to their own personal liking. In addition to this, Respondent 4 added the following reason regarding assessment tasks:

*“...not so much on quiz/test since all you have to do is to memorize things without understanding.”*

(Respondent 4)

From the response, it can be implied that assessment practices such as quizzes and tests inhibit students' creative ability. This was perceived as such by the respondent since these types of assessment only involved memorization and not comprehension of knowledge. In relation to this, Respondent 5 also reported on the importance of folio as part of the assessments that can assist creative thinking. The following extract justifies the response given:

*“For Art students, the most important thing is our **folio** that we can enhance our creativity based on hands-on activity in the class.”*

(Respondent 5)

The findings reflect the respondents' background as a Visual Art student where creativity can be displayed through creative activities especially from the use of folios. In this case, folio was seen as a primary tool to assess students' performance since Art Education requires students to make use of their creativity to come up with a compilation of art masterpieces. Moreover, the respondent also mentioned 'hands-on activity' which enables them to develop and optimize their cognitive ability. This further suggests the idea that creativity is a priority in completing tasks in the classroom.

In contrast with respondents who were from the TESL or Management and Leadership background, presentation and article review were thought to be the foremost platform for students to develop creativity. From such assignments, students believed that they were able to be creative with words and personal style when writing as well as presenting the content knowledge. Among the three, the Visual Art students were the most flexible in exhibiting their creativity since students claimed that hands-on activities were commonly employed in the classroom. Moreover, the nature of the Art Education allows for unique and different ideas to be displayed among students (Leong, 2009). This is different as compared to TESL as well as Leadership and Management programme in which, the curricula can be very structured in terms of content which may limit students' creativity in certain assignments.

### **How classroom assessment influences creativity among students**

From the analysis of findings, the respondents generally believed that assessment played an important role to generate creativity among students. Based on the quantitative findings, there are a number of ways creativity can be enhanced through the use of assessment. The respondents

reported their answers in terms of the processes that can be implemented while working on their assignment. To nurture creativity, respondents associated assessment with the use of cognitive ability to come up with novel ideas and learning input. Such responses are evident in the following extract:

*"It allows me to read and think and use my brain wisely before I give my response. I think that we are not being static, isn't it? Not only think within your comfort zone, you need to think about what people might think and you need to give reflection on that."*

(Respondent 1)

In the extract, Respondent 1 explained the response based on the completion of article review as a type of assessment that allowed room for creative thinking. Phrases from other respondents such as *'get inspiration everywhere and not necessarily 'by the book'', 'able to transform readings'* and *'share and develop new ideas'* further support the idea that creativity could be developed through different ways. The responses given also suggest the application of divergent and convergent thinking were involved in writing processes. The knowledge that was made known to the students was converged with new ideas in order to apply theory into practice. At the same time, students developed ideas that diverged from the common knowledge and find other possibilities to display creativity. From the findings, it was discovered that both divergent and convergent thinking have indeed contributed to students' creativity in doing tasks.

In terms of oral assessment, Respondent 2 and 4 added the following responses based on presentation tasks.

*"I get to present in my own way for example, showing interesting video clips, finding authentic resources to share with the class. Presentations have also helped increased my confidence in speaking tremendously."*

(Respondent 2)

*"When presenting, I will be able to transform my readings and share it with my friends. From the discussion during the presentation, it will enable us to share and develop new ideas. That new ideas will provide significant insight to us."*

(Respondent 4)

Referring to the given answers, the respondents indicated that presentation did not only provide a space for discussion but at the same time, new ideas can be generated and shared among other students. In addition to that, carrying out presentations was also perceived as a medium to further augment students' creativity. This can be accomplished through some creative processes which can be employed in class. To elaborate more on this matter, variation in assessment tasks is a key indicator that determines creativity in presentation. The opinions given by different respondents on the use of presentation suggest the idea that different varieties can be employed when conducting presentations. This is justified in the following response by Respondent 3.

*“...in front of the audience or the topic, you can do something like set induction. You can do videos, something that can touch the soul of the audience, you can give them some activities, and then you can get them work out their energy, so they just don’t sit back and listen to your presentation. It can really reveal out your creativity. You can do whatever you want to do because you are the presenter, you own the floor.”*

(Respondent 3)

Here, the findings suggest that students had the tendency to display their creative ability by having a number of ways to attract the attention of potential audience during presentation. Involving series of ways or processes appeared to help students to structure their presentation based on the required tasks. Not only that, students also put in a lot of effort to go extra miles to ensure the effectiveness of their presentation. This eventually led to the contribution of creativity as students selectively instilled variations of creative processes throughout the presentation.

While presentation may be regarded as employing variation in developing creativity, folio is also perceived differently. Among the Visual Art students, folio is a form of compilation that requires them to gather all their artistic masterpieces as a form of personal collection. Interestingly, Respondent 5 opined that folio gave them the opportunity to develop more creative ideas based on lecturer’s comments and ideas as evident in the following extract.

*The process of folio, when we did something in class, then the lecturers help us by giving new ideas that we as students are still learning, so when the lecturers give us ideas then we can enhance our creativity in class. Not only we enhance, actually we try to generate new things. New things like regarding our life in the school or at the workplace. So basically it works together.*

(Respondent 5)

From the given response, the respondent felt that the support and assistance given by their lecturers had enabled them to think from a wider perspective. Students were able to create new understanding based on the knowledge already known to them. Therefore, it can be observed that folio actually boosts students’ creative ability since creativity is known to be a process that consists of growing bodies of abilities. Since folio requires students to constantly update the content, students can revisit and amend their works from time to time. This on-going process clearly brings to light the use of folio as a form of formative assessment.

### **Discussion of Salient Findings**

The quantitative analysis on students’ perceptions of assessment indicated a positive attitude from the respondents based on the five dimensions of assessment: (a) congruence with planned learning (CPL), (b) assessment authenticity (AA), (c) students’ consultation and assessment (SCL), (d) transparency of assessment (TA), and (e) students’ capabilities (SC). From the five constructs, results showed the highest mean score in the transparency of assessment based on students’ perceptual view. The findings clearly implied that assessment was made evident to the students in various aspects. This includes the clarity of assessment breakdowns, when and what students were assessed on as well as the requirements of assessment tasks. Interestingly, this

report appeared to support the findings of Sayed Ahmad Javid Musawwy (2009) who discovered that students generally understood what was required of the assessment tasks.

The findings also indicated that the fourth dimension of assessment which is the students' capabilities was negatively perceived by students. Students claimed that they lack the flexibility when it comes to assessment. Students' rights to be heard were found to be secondary especially in deciding upon a particular type of assessment that suit their preference. This finding was also supported by Freire (2008) who addressed on the lack of students' involvement when it comes to making decisions about curriculum content. Also, students were limited from having options when dealing with confusing questions. This also explained the current findings where students felt that the assessment tasks appeared to be rigid with no choice to decide upon certain assessment tasks. This suggests the stringency in the existing assessment tasks which seem to limit students' ability to display creativity.

Also, the findings pointed out that students were not assessed based on what they memorized but rather on what was thought and learned in class. This reflects the findings of Beghetto (2005) who indicated that rote learning diminishes creativity among students. With this in mind, understanding and knowledge creation among students are vital to ensure creative learning are effectively implemented (Craft, 2001; Runco, 2007). It was found that assessment also help to promote authentic learning among students. The findings suggested that students applied learning into real-life situations. This further implies that assessment appear to benefit students to face everyday encounters. Additionally, the results also echoed the statement asserted by Popham (2006) in which authentic assessment allowed students to come up with a task that can be closely related to real-life situation. Results also indicated that instructors gave enough explanation to students about the details of assessments. When students were well-informed of every assessment details, it denotes that instructors carry their responsibilities well. According to Kleiman (2005), good instructors always ensure the lucidity of classroom information to enable students to understand better. However, it was also found that students were not in the know about how they will be marked. The findings showed that while students may be well-informed of every detail, some were unaware of what the assessment were based on. This leads to the importance of assessment rubrics.

Another salient finding revealed the use of oral presentation as a type of assessment that provided room for individual creativity among students. The task to present in front the class did not only allow room for creativity but also enhanced students' confidence level as reported by the respondents. Presentations gave students the flexibility to deliver pertinent matters based on their personal understanding which further harness creative thinking skills. Moreover, previous studies have also supported that presentation has the potential to elicit students' ability to be original and creative (Hardman, 2008 as cited in Faizah Abd Majid, 2010; Faizah Abd Majid, 2010). On the contrary, results revealed that tests and quizzes did not encourage creativity in student learning. It was said that these types of assessment only focused on memorizing facts but not understanding them. Beghetto (2005) voiced out similar concerns regarding tests and quizzes which tend to stifle students' creativity along the way. Additionally, Faizah Abd Majid (2010) also supported the view indicating her findings to exclude quizzes from assessment since they

only rely on heavy memorization.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Educators play a major role in ensuring the smooth running of the teaching and learning process, by making sure students are clear about the breakdown or criteria of evaluation and grading policies. The university may also consider changes at the faculty level by looking at the best practices across different curriculum be it from the TESL programme, Management and Leadership programme or Visual Art programme. According to Stefanova (2009), students who possess great interest in different areas of learning are those who display more sense of creativity and engagement in learning. Therefore, it is important that all pertinent aspects should be well taken care of by the university to optimize students' learning experience in the university environment. Furthermore, the current pedagogical practices should also take into consideration strategies that could measure creative learning through different forms of assessments. Formative learning is one way students could advance further in their learning (Chan & Sidhu, 2009). One way to show appreciation for creative expression includes nurturing creative thinking skills, increase students' motivation and acknowledging responses which are unique through assignment and tasks that are not typical or common in nature (Pleschova, 2007). All these are able to be carried out through the implementation of formative assessment where educators have the chance to consistently monitor students' progress.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study employed cluster sampling in order to obtain the perceptions from the target sample. Hence, it only intends to look into the perspective of the postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education, UiTM Shah Alam. Since the study is structured as such, the target respondents of this study only encompassed final year students from three postgraduate programmes from the Faculty of Education. Due to the sample size, the findings of the study can only be generalised to the aforementioned group of students. Additionally, the findings of the study are only based on postgraduate students' perception of the existing classroom assessment. Data collection was conducted through surveys, interview sessions and document analysis. There were no additional data collected from the faculty or opinion from classroom instructors that may assist to the development of the study. This is not projected to be carried out as it would have complicated the design of the study. The inclusion of face-to-face interview among selected students is thought to be sufficient to contribute to the equilibrium and precision of this study.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Overall, the quantitative findings showed that the postgraduate students perceived assessment to be fairly adequate based on the five assessment dimensions namely a) congruence with planned learning (CPL), b) assessment authenticity (AA), c) students' consultation and assessment (SCL), d) transparency of assessment (TA), and e) students' capabilities (SC). They also agreed that the existing assessment methods practiced by the faculty are progressing on the right track. Students delivered a positive attitude with regards to the current assessment although some statements were negatively perceived. Such negative responses need to be addressed accordingly

to ensure effective forms of assessment methods are put into practice. In terms of qualitative findings, the respondents agreed that certain assignments especially oral presentation, had allowed them to incorporate variation and apply creative thinking ability into assessment tasks which eventually augment their creative ability. Both article review and folio had enabled students to execute convergent and divergent thinking in developing creativity. The respondents also stressed on the significant role of assessment in developing students' creativity in the existing assessment practices. Future researchers may explore other types of assessment and examine its contribution to student creativity. Also, other pertinent skills such as leadership and problem-solving skills can be associated to assessment practices, especially in preparing students to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Other recommendations are to include educators and members of the faculty in the interview protocol to seek for more in depth information regarding this matter. Additionally, other documents such as students' assignments and educators' teaching portfolio may also be analysed in future studies. This will eventually help to improve the effectiveness of the programmes offered in higher education in developing creativity among students for global demands.

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